

## **Launching the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program (Internal)** **Frequently Asked Questions for Pharmacy Partners and Jurisdictions**

### **Q: When will the program start?**

As part of the initial phased implementation, select pharmacies in every jurisdiction will begin providing a limited amount of COVID-19 vaccine through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program as early as Thursday, February 11. This phase of the program is designed to engage the system in a limited way to ensure the infrastructure is ready for large scale implementation when vaccine supply increases.

### **Q: Which pharmacy partners will be receiving vaccine for the program launch?**

All pharmacy partners will be providing COVID-19 vaccine in a limited number of retail locations as part of the initial program launch, which will occur over a 2-week period. Jurisdictions and pharmacy partners have received lists of which partners will be providing vaccine in each jurisdiction as the program launches. CDC has created a [webpage](#) that lists the pharmacy partners currently participating in the program in your state.

### **Q: How much vaccine will pharmacy partners receive for the program launch and weekly thereafter?**

The federal government is providing 1 million doses of Moderna vaccine for the launch of the program. Weekly allocations are anticipated to eventually increase as the vaccine supply increases and will eventually include all vaccine products authorized for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

### **How will allocations be made?**

The program will begin with per capita allocations by each jurisdiction that will be divided among the selected pharmacy partners based on number of stores and reach. As the program expands, and supply becomes more readily available, the allocation may be adjusted to reflect partner size (number of store locations nationwide), reach (percent of the total U.S. population living within 5 miles of a store location), and ability to vaccinate (throughput).

### **Q: How were the pharmacies that will start as part of the program launch selected?**

CDC worked with states and territories to select initial pharmacy partners to start the program in their communities. Jurisdictions made selections based on a number of factors including the number of stores, the ability to reach some of the populations most at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (those over 65 years of age, socially vulnerable communities), and alignment with their existing vaccination plan. The initial selections are just a starting point, and eventually, pharmacy partners will provide COVID-19 vaccine in every state or territory where they have retail or long-term care pharmacy locations.

### **Q: How many retail locations will receive vaccine as part of the launch?**

CDC is working with federal pharmacy partners to determine which retail locations in the partners' assigned jurisdictions will receive a limited supply of COVID-19 vaccine as part of the program launch. Partners will continue to expand stores included in the program as additional supply increases. CDC will share the list of retail locations with states and territories.

As vaccine supply increases, pharmacy partners will be able to provide vaccine to additional retail locations in their assigned jurisdictions. Jurisdictions can view inventory levels for every retail pharmacy location providing COVID-19 vaccine in their jurisdiction via a VaccineFinder feed in Tiberius.

### **Q: How much vaccine will each retail location receive as part of this program?**

The pharmacy partners will decide, in close coordination with CDC, exactly how many doses will be shipped to each store location based on available supply and estimated throughput and demand.

**Q: How does this program impact jurisdictions' vaccine allocations?**

The allocation provided for this program is **separate** from jurisdictions' weekly allocations. This phase of the program is designed to engage the system in a limited way to ensure the infrastructure is ready for large scale implementation when vaccine supply increases.

**Q: Which populations will be eligible for vaccination through this program when it launches?**

Federal pharmacy partners will follow guidance from their jurisdictions on which populations are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination. Partners will screen individuals prior to vaccination to ensure their retail locations are vaccinating according to their jurisdiction's vaccination plan.

CDC will confirm each jurisdiction's eligibility criteria prior to the program launch via a survey in Tiberius. Jurisdictions will have the opportunity to update their screening criteria weekly in Tiberius in the early stages of the phased implementation of the program.

**Q: When will additional population groups be eligible for vaccination through this program?**

CDC will work with jurisdictions and pharmacy partners to monitor vaccine demand, supply, and market saturation. As supply increases and demand among initial populations slows, jurisdictions will expand vaccination eligibility to wider population groups, and pharmacy partners will adjust their eligibility requirements in each jurisdiction accordingly.

**Q: What kind of screening will pharmacy partners conduct to determine vaccination eligibility as part of this program?**

Pharmacy partners will employ eligibility screeners in each jurisdiction to determine if an individual is eligible for COVID-19 vaccination according to the jurisdiction's vaccination plan. Screeners may ask individuals about their age, occupation, or underlying medical conditions. Screeners may also check for precautions and contraindications to COVID-19 vaccines using CDC's pre-vaccination form. Pharmacies will not require proof of age, occupation, or any other type of credentials; however, they will rely on self-attestation for validating group membership. This assures that no one will be turned away for lack of specific identification documents (e.g. driver's licenses) and eases the burden on participating pharmacies and individuals.

**Q: When will additional pharmacy partners be added in each jurisdiction?**

As supply grows, pharmacy partners will be able to start vaccinating in additional jurisdictions, using their expertise to best meet demand. Pharmacy partners will notify CDC of their intent to expand, and CDC will work with jurisdictions before a new pharmacy partner starts providing COVID-19 vaccine in their jurisdiction.

**Q: How will jurisdictions know how much vaccine each pharmacy partner in their jurisdiction is receiving?**

Jurisdictions will have access to a dashboard in Tiberius that includes VaccineFinder and VTrckS feeds from every pharmacy partner providing COVID-19 vaccine in their jurisdiction. The VaccineFinder feed will provide store-level inventory numbers that update daily.

**Q: What data will jurisdictions have access to as part of this program?**

In addition to reporting inventory levels, all pharmacy partners enrolled in the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program are required to report patient administration information to the jurisdiction's IIS and directly to CDC's COVID-19 Data Clearinghouse. Jurisdictions will have access to patient administration data submitted by all pharmacies in their jurisdiction; however, these data will not specify whether the pharmacy is providing vaccine through the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program, the Pharmacy Transfer Program, or through enrollment with the jurisdiction.

**Q: What will pharmacy partners do with excess vaccine that is nearing its expiration date?**

CDC supports optimizing the use of all COVID-19 vaccine. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends expanding vaccine availability to broader population groups when vaccine supply in a certain

location is in danger of being unused. Pharmacies should use this guidance when making plans to ensure no dose is wasted.

**Q: Will pharmacy partners receive first and second doses separately as part of their allocation for this program?**

Yes. The federal government will add the allocation for second doses 2 to 3 weeks after the first doses are allocated, depending on the product. Pharmacies are encouraged to use their current reminder systems to reach out to individuals when it's time to return for a second dose. Additionally, pharmacists should encourage enrollment in v-safe, the after-vaccination health checker, and VaxText, which will remind an individual when to return for their second dose.

**Q: If retail pharmacies are already administering COVID-19 vaccine, what does this program add?**

The Federal Retail Pharmacy Program is designed to take full advantage of the capacity of pharmacy partners. The full advantage of this program will be reached as it scales up and more vaccine becomes available. Starting now will ensure the program is optimally operating when expanded.

**Q: How will people know that their local pharmacy has vaccine?**

Individuals who are eligible for vaccination in their state and are interested in getting vaccinated at their local pharmacy should check the pharmacy's website to find out if vaccine is available. Some jurisdictions have also launched websites that show where COVID-19 vaccine is available for eligible individuals.

Most pharmacy partners are using online scheduling systems to schedule vaccination visits for eligible individuals based on their limited available vaccine supply.

**Q: Can states opt-out of this program?**

States cannot opt-out of this program. The retail pharmacies will be receiving a direct allocation from the federal government so this will not affect the amount of vaccine each state receives. The benefits of this program after it scales up to full capacity are twofold:

- Decrease the operational and logistic burden for state and local public health departments.
- For individuals, this will open up access, especially as the program expands to more pharmacies and more supply is available, to free COVID-19 vaccine that can be provided at a local pharmacy from a trusted, trained, and familiar source.

**Q: Can retail pharmacy partners transfer or move vaccine from one state to another?**

Pharmacy partners are receiving one single allocation that they are dividing among their retail locations in their assigned jurisdictions. As part of the program launch, CDC provided pharmacy partners with targeted allocations by jurisdiction to ensure equitable distribution across the country. CDC is continuously monitoring each pharmacy partner's inventory by state and territory to help ensure fair access nationwide. In the future, as vaccine supply increases, pharmacy partners will use their expertise on how to best manage supply and demand to distribute allocation among their retail locations, across jurisdictions.